

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 24, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services and Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services and Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Inouye, Cochran, Harkin and Shelby:

We urge you to join us in supporting Fiscal Year 2011 appropriation levels for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Head Start, and Early Head Start that will enable these programs to sustain the crucial supports they provide to children and their families. Without sufficient funding, 300,000 or more children will be cut from these programs and classrooms will be at risk of shutting down.

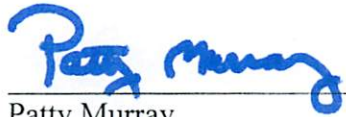
CCDBG, Head Start, and Early Head Start help low-income parents afford the child care they need to hold down steady jobs, and provide vulnerable children with the early learning experiences they need to be successful in school. Moreover, noted economists agree that investing in early childhood education is fiscally responsible because it yields a tremendous return on investment, ranging from \$3 to \$17 for every dollar invested. Research demonstrates that high-quality early education programs help reduce the need for special education and education remediation, lower juvenile justice rates, improve health outcomes, increase high school graduation and college matriculation rates, and increase self-sufficiency and productivity among families.

Regrettably, these programs reach just a fraction of those eligible children and families who stand to benefit. Only one in six eligible children receive child care assistance. Only four percent of eligible infants and toddlers participate in Early Head Start, and less than half of eligible preschool-age children participate in Head Start.

Given these gaps and the importance of early learning to our country's economic success, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included a prudent and essential expansion for these programs. We strongly believe that Congress must build on this progress, not reverse it.

We ask you to work with us to protect early learning opportunities for children by providing as much funding as possible for CCDBG, Head Start, and Early Head Start in the next Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations bill. Cuts to these programs will have drastic long-term effects that will be damaging to our country's economic competitiveness. CCDBG, Head Start, and Early Head Start are responsible investments that will help us build a smarter, healthier, and stronger America.

Sincerely,

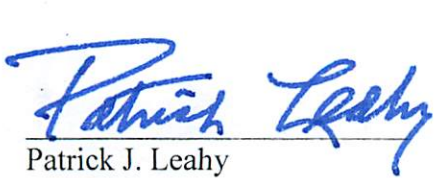


Patty Murray
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator

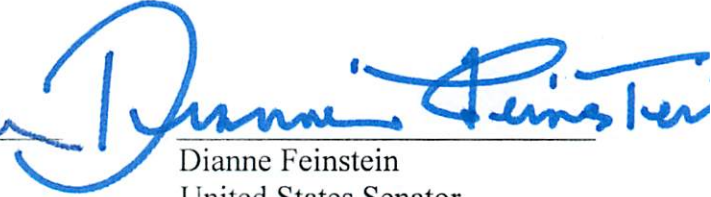
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

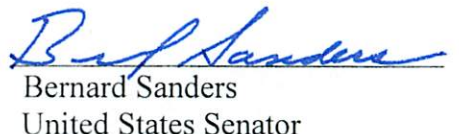


Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator



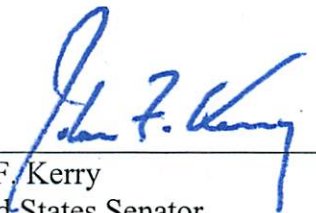
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



John F. Kerry
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator